



The



Measurably Better IT™
Management Framework

By

EPION®

[Executive Summary](#)

The Framework ensures that we collectively stay focused on the point of IT –helping you achieve an Outcome. It also removes the mystery of IT management by providing clear metrics and a shared definition of what success looks like for any given Outcome.

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About Measurably Better IT™

Measurably Better IT is a registered trademark (application pending) of EpiOn, LLC.

About EmPower

EmPower is an IT management program built on the principles of EpiOn's Measurably Better IT Management Framework. EmPower provides clients with a robust suite of IT tools, resources, and processes, along with an unlimited IT Support Desk to answer any questions or address any issues you might have. Under EmPower, we continuously audit and align your IT environment to best practices for efficiency, security, continuity, and compliance. For you as a user, that translates into greater IT functionality with less downtime.

About EpiOn

At EpiOn, our mission is to “Empower you to achieve more through technology”. We do that through a structured IT management process that helps you improve productivity while simultaneously lowering the risks associated with technology usage. We are a Tennessee-based company that consistently ranks among the top IT firms in the world. For more information, visit EpiOn.com.



What's the Point of IT?

Stop and think for a minute. Why does your organization have Information Technology (IT) in the first place? What's the fundamental business value? In some capacity, your answer probably revolves around the idea of "productivity." You have IT because it helps your organization accomplish more with less. Your operation is better, faster, or cheaper because of its use of technology – at least in theory.

- IT helps a service company provide better customer service with fewer people.
- IT helps a medical office eliminate the storage and retrieval costs of paper charts.
- IT helps a manufacturing company unlock new computer-aided design and assembly systems. Simultaneously improving operations and lowering costs.

You get the point. If you are truly managing IT effectively, it creates a strategic advantage. IT, at its best, creates "Leverage" for your organization that improves productivity, unlocks innovation, and enables data-driven decision-making.

The Reward/Risk Trade off of IT

In exchange for this productivity opportunity, you take on certain business risks. Being IT-dependent means that technology can now cripple your business or put you out of business altogether. The risks of IT reliance generally fall into one of four buckets:

- **Efficiency Risks** – The risk of poor performing, unreliable systems hampering usage.
- **Security Risks** – The risk of cyber theft, liability, or extortion and the related impacts on operations and reputation.
- **Continuity Risks** – The existential risk created by data loss or prolonged downtime.
- **Compliance Risks** – The risk of regulatory penalties, lawsuits, or lost insurance coverage associated with non-compliance.

The Mystery of IT Management

When we ask prospective clients if they are confident in the health of their IT environment, we often get answers like, "I hope we are OK." or "They tell me we are OK." But, to borrow the title of a famous book, Hope is Not a Strategy.

We get it. IT is not your day job. You're busy running a business. Besides, IT professionals often use complex jargon – making it difficult for a lay person to understand. You've delegated IT to someone else and trust that they are doing a good job. But are they? Have you delegated or abdicated your oversight of IT?

Most leaders don't want to abdicate IT oversight, but they just don't know how to assess the performance of their IT environment or the team managing it. You need a shared Framework that defines the Outcomes you want to achieve and provides a context for measuring success.

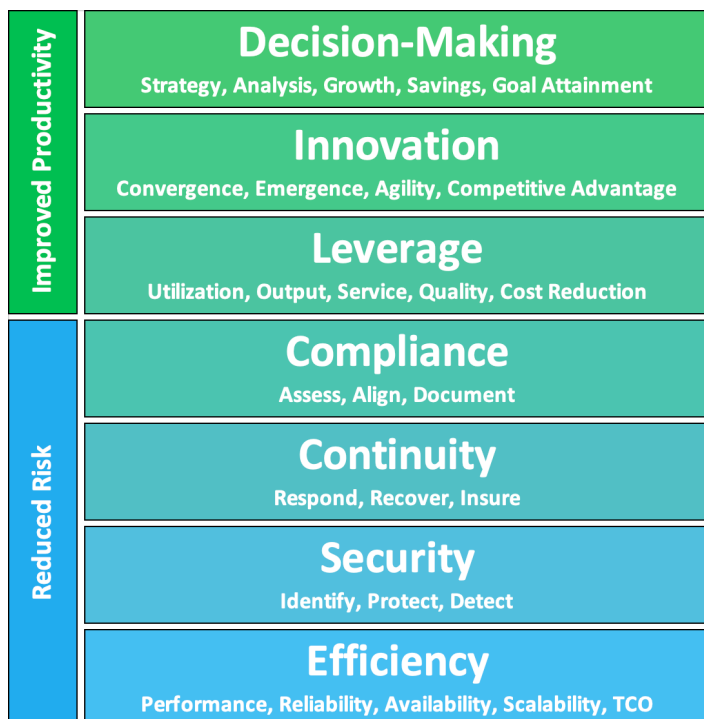
The Need for a Framework

IT is too important and complex to be left to haphazard management. Even with a small network of just 30 devices, there are literally thousands of settings that need to be rigorously implemented. To truly achieve those productivity gains – while simultaneously managing your risks – you need a structured, process-driven approach to IT management.

IT should be all about helping you achieve an Outcome. That’s why, at EpiOn, we call our approach the “Measurably Better IT Management Framework.” The MBIT Framework is built upon the seven core business Outcomes of Efficiency, Security, Continuity, Compliance, Leverage, Innovation, and Decision-Making.

In many respects, each Outcome serves as the foundation for higher Outcomes. Efficiency, Security, Continuity, and Compliance are all about reducing the risks of technology reliance. Leverage, Innovation, and Decision-Making are all about maximizing the productivity promise of technology.





Specific Objectives govern each Outcome. For instance, Figure 1 shows that we can't claim to be Efficient if we constantly battle performance or Reliability issues.

Each Objective, in turn, ties directly to IT Standards(or best practices) that drive specific Policies, Processes, and Tools.

At EpiOn, we deliver "Measurably Better IT". Each Outcome has a couple of specific, easy-to-understand, Metrics that you can track to know where you stand.

Figure 1: Measurably Better IT Management Framework

Conceptually you might think of the MBIT Framework like this:

Outcome › Objective › Standard › Policy/Process/Tool › Metric

If all of this sounds a little overwhelming initially, don't worry. Focus on an Outcome and the Metrics associated with that Outcome. If you are an EpiOn EmPower client, your Virtual Chief Information Officer (vCIO) will gradually walk you through the MBIT Framework. Each quarterly meeting focuses on a different Outcome and its related Metrics. A complete discussion of each Outcome, the supporting Objectives, and the relevant Metrics follows in Appendix A.

The Need for a Scorecard

As mentioned above, between Outcomes and Metrics, there are Objectives, Standards, and Policies within the MBIT Framework. These items serve as the tactical infrastructure that gives your IT management strategy life.

Without getting into the minutia, your IT team should have hundreds of standards and policies—based on industry best practices and their own experience. Over time, the standards evolve, and your systems will naturally fall out of alignment due to the rhythm of usage, updates, etc.

That means your IT team should also have an ongoing process to assess and align your IT environment with these standards. These assessments drive your Metrics. The MBIT Framework boils these Metrics down into a Scorecard—a simple, one-page report that summarizes the health of your IT. EpiOn offers three versions of the Scorecard:

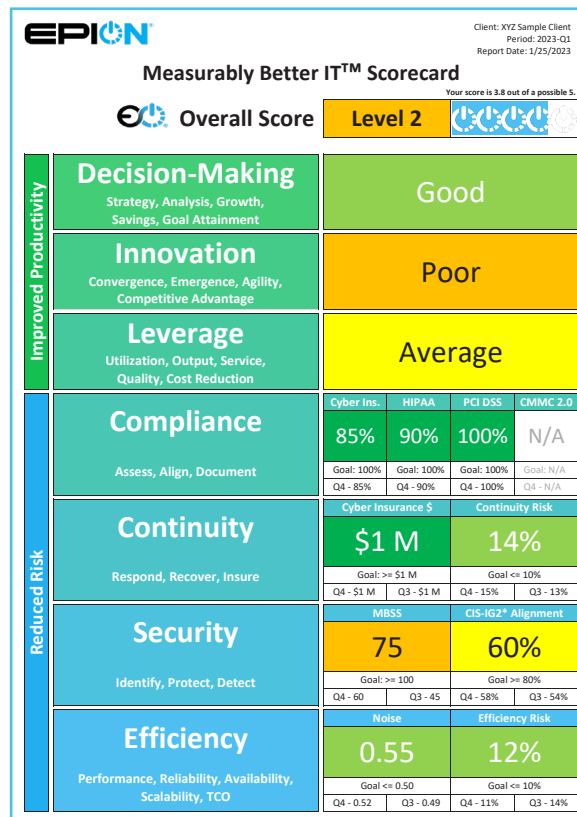


Figure 2: Measurably Better IT Scorecard (Empower Edition)

- **Self-Assessment** – a free assessment tool that simplifies hundreds of EpiOn’s best practices and standards into a few dozen questions. The self-assessment provides a “gut check” on where you stand.

- **Pro-Assessment** – a one-time assessment service where EpiOn checks your alignment to our more comprehensive standards and best practices. You get a Scorecard, detailed reports, and specific action items to review with your IT team.
- **EmPower** – EpiOn’s EmPower clients receive a quarterly Scorecard as part of their ongoing vCIO experience. They can drill down to sub-reports on each Metric to better understand their scores and track progress. Ultimately, the Scorecard creates clarity. You know where you stand and where to focus. It empowers you and your team to truly leverage your IT investment like never before. To learn more about the MBIT Scorecard, visit our website at:
<https://www.EpiOn.com/Scorecard>

Summary

Your IT systems should be helping you achieve business Outcomes—driving improved productivity while reducing risk. The MBIT Framework provides the structure and management Figure 2: Measurably Better IT Scorecard(EmPower Edition) framework you need to create a collaborative relationship with your IT team. For more detail on the Framework, Outcomes, Objectives, and Metrics, read on in Appendix A. Your IT team should have standards and policies that align with each Objective. It’s unnecessary for you to get into the details of those standards, but asking them for a copy of their standards might be illuminating—just to see if they can readily produce them.

If it would help to have a strategic, non-sales conversation to review your situation, feel free to use this link to Schedule a Call (<https://www.EpiOn.com>).

Appendix A

Outcomes, Objectives, and Metrics

Outcome: Efficiency

Lower Technical Risk by managing IT infrastructure for Performance, Reliability, Availability, and Scalability while controlling your Total Cost of Ownership.

Efficiency
Performance, Reliability, Availability, Scalability, TCO

Efficiency addresses the proactive, day-to-day management of your IT infrastructure (i.e., your network, servers, laptops, desktops, mobile devices, and applications).

Objectives

- **Performance:** Standards associated with speed, congestion, capability, accessibility, useability, etc.
- **Reliability:** Standards associated with the prevention of downtime. This would include proper physical condition, patching, life cycle, warranty, health, configuration, short-term capacity issues, supportability, environmental controls, power management, documentation, etc.
- **Availability:** Standards associated with resiliency and high availability to maintain normal operations. This would include things like redundancy, hot spares, and failover.
- **Scalability:** Standards associated with long-term capacity planning and the ability to function properly when increasing or decreasing resources as needed to meet the higher or lower demands of the business.
- **Total Cost of Ownership:** TCO includes hardware and software acquisition, ongoing management and support, performance, the opportunity cost of downtime, training, and other productivity losses.

Metrics

- **Noise:** How often do users need technical support? Calculation: Reactive Tickets per Seat per Month. Low Noise (<0.50) signifies a healthy IT environment.
- **Efficiency Risk:** Risk of downtime or reduced performance due to issues related to Performance, Reliability, Availability, and Scalability
 - Calculation: Average Assessment Scores for Efficiency
 - A lower score, coupled with specific misalignment details, empowers you to make informed business decisions relative to the risk you are willing to bear.

Outcome: Security

Reduce Cybersecurity Risk by aligning to industry best practices (e.g., the CIS Controls) built upon the principles of Identify, Protect, and Detect. Security covers the standards, products, and services that safeguard your IT systems, data, and users from cyber threats.

Security Identify, Protect, Detect

Objectives

- **Identify:** Standards related to understanding the cyber security risk to systems, people, assets, data, and capabilities; the business context; and the resources that support critical functions.
- **Protect:** The tools, policies, and procedural safeguards used to defend data access and ensure the delivery of critical infrastructure services.
- **Detect:** Tools and controls that increase the chance of recognizing IT security anomalies and events in a timely fashion.

Ultimately, it is important to understand that there is no such thing as “secure.” If the bad guys want in bad enough, you probably can’t spend enough money to stop them. You can tilt the odds in your favor by slowing them down to increase the likelihood of detecting their presence before they can deliver the fatal blow.

Metrics

- **MBSS:** The “Measurably Better Security Score” boils multiple aspects of your security environment down into a single metric. It includes things such as:
 - Microsoft Security Score – Microsoft’s measure of your cloud security.
 - LastPass Password Score – The average score for user password hygiene.
 - Security Awareness Training Score – User scores in SAT training and phishing tests.
 - With MBSS, the higher, the better.
- **CIS-IG2-SMB:** – Alignment to the Center for Internet Security framework of best practices to Identify, Protect and Detect cyber threats. CIS-IG2 protects against the most common threats.
 - Calculation: Average Assessment Scores for Security
 - A high CIS Score, coupled with specific misalignment details, empowers you to make informed business decisions relative to the risk you are willing to bear.

Outcome: Continuity

Mitigate Operational Risks by ensuring you can Respond and Recover from potential incidents, breaches, and disasters.

Continuity Respond, Recover, Insure

Continuity covers the standards, products, and services that protect against data loss and the potential prolonged IT outages related to employee accidents, cyber threats, and natural disasters.

Objectives

- **Respond:** The plans, policies, and actions to contain a detected cyber security incident or breach or respond to some form of physical disaster.
- **Recover:** The policies and actions to maintain plans for resilience and to support the ability to recover to normal operations.
- **Insure:** The first-party cyber liability coverage you obtain through your insurance broker. This coverage should be factored into your Respond and Recover plans.

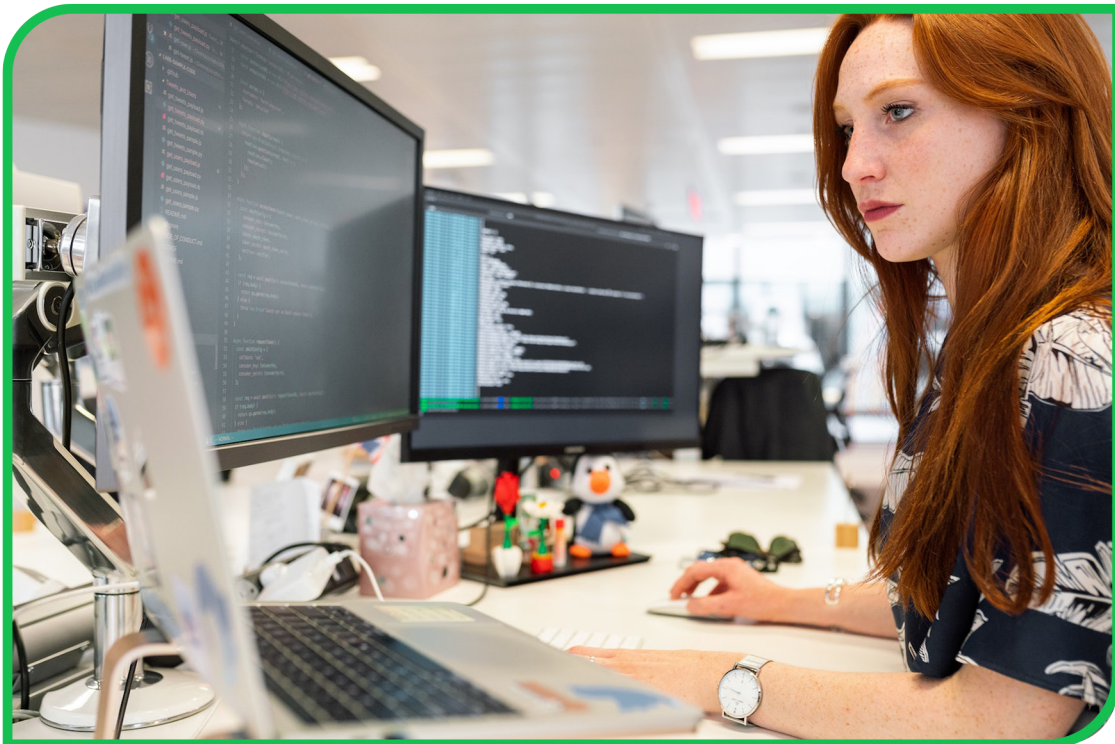
The planning and preparation processes related to Respond and Recover are factors within your control as a business owner. You CAN make sure that you have performed a risk assessment and have a solid Incident Response Plan and a solid Disaster Recovery Plan.

You CAN ensure that your backup process is healthy and that you have immutable off-site copies of your data. You CAN make sure that the recovery plans are tested regularly and that they can achieve your Recovery Time Objective (RTO).

Insure is all about addressing the risks that you can't control. Your insurance carrier will tell you that, right now, the most significant risk you face is the threat of a cyber-attack. Most businesses are far more likely to file a claim over a cyber event than any other business event. If you don't yet have a dedicated cyber insurance policy, please consider getting one.

Metrics

- **Cyber Insurance:** Ensuring you have cyber theft, liability, and extortion coverage.
 - Calculation- EpiOn recommends \$1-3 million in coverage based on your revenue.
- **Continuity Risk:** Risk of extended downtime due to non-compliance with the Center for Internet Security framework of best practices for Respond and Recover.
 - Calculation- Average Assessment Scores for Continuity
 - A low CR score and specific misalignment details provide peace of mind that you are well-prepared for unexpected events.



Outcome: Compliance

Lessen your financial risk from fines, legal action, and reputational damage. Assess, Align, and Document your IT environment to regulatory, industry, and insurance requirements.

Compliance Asses, Align, Document

Compliance covers the standards, IT tools, and IT management processes that help you assess and continuously align your technology to best practices and regulatory requirements.

Objectives

- **Assess:** The periodic review of your environment compared to IT standards and regulatory and insurance requirements.
- **Align:** The actions taken to address gaps identified by the Assess process, such as configuration changes, IT policy enforcement, and capital investment.
- **Document:** Demonstrate a culture of control and compliance through the ongoing documentation of the Assess and Align processes. If you are an EmPower client, examples would include:
 - Assessment Runs: Available through your portal at <https://portal.EpiOn.com>.
Go to Compliance > Assessments > EmPower Master Assessment
 - Planner Recommendations: [Available at https://portal.EpiOn.com](https://portal.EpiOn.com).
Go to Account > Planner
 - Report Archives: Additional reports related to compliance, security, and data backup are available at <https://portal.EpiOn.com>.
Go to Compliance > Report Archives
 - IT Policy Statements (i.e. Acceptable Use, Media Disposal, Privacy, BYOD, etc.): Available at <https://portal.EpiOn.com>. **Go to Company > Knowledge Base**

Metrics

- **Alignment Scores**– Alignment scores to IT Standards (i.e. CIS Controls), Regulations (i.e. HIPAA, PCI, GLBA), and Insurance Requirements. Available at <https://portal.EpiOn.com>.
Go to Compliance > Assessments

Outcome: Leverage

Capitalize on your technology investment to accomplish more with less while simultaneously lowering costs and increasing profitability.

Leverage
Utilization, Output, Service, Quality, Cost Reduction

Leverage is all about helping you get “more” done with less. Less effort, less staff, and less expense. The right approach to technology allows you to improve your output, customer service, and quality while at the same time reducing costs and increasing profits.

Objectives

The specific wording of your Objectives may vary, but we commonly see:

- **Utilization:** Assess your use of existing systems to identify and maximize the potential of under-used features and capacities.
- **Increased Output:** Sustain or increase the volume of work without increasing staffing.
- **Better Service:** Response to customers improves in terms of timeliness, accuracy, etc.
- **Quality Improvement:** Mistakes and rework are eliminated.
- **Reduced Cost:** Gains in output, service, and quality lead to financial savings and profit.

Metrics

In the productivity areas of the MBIT Framework, the Metrics you track should be specific to your organization. Leverage metrics fall into two categories.

- IT Leverage (evidence that your team is tech-driven)
 - Tech Adoption–Utilization rates of various technology assets.
 - % of features used within key line of business applications
 - Office 365 Usage Stats
 - Training Hours–Staff engagement with IT education resources.
- Operational Leverage (productivity measures specific to your business)
 - Output (parts, service, etc.) Per Labor Hour
 - Defect Rates
 - Net Profit %

Outcome: Innovation

Using technology to introduce new ideas, workflows, methodologies, services, or products.

Innovation
Convergence, Emergence, Agility, Competitive Advantage

Innovation creates value for the organization by improving existing products, services, or processes; solving a problem; or opening new markets or revenue opportunities. IT-enabled innovation comes from finding convergent uses for well-established solutions or exploring emerging technologies.

Objectives

- **Convergence:** Embracing well-established solutions and integrating their capabilities into existing services and processes. For example, cloud-based collaboration technologies change how your team works and engages with customers.
- **Emergence:** Harnessing emerging technologies to create or streamline services and processes in ways that were not possible before the introduction of the technology. For example, Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and Weak AI are well worth exploring.
- **Agility:** Be more responsive to change, hasten the time to market, and reduce costs without sacrificing quality by creating a culture that leans into technology adoption.
- **Competitive Advantage:** Attract more customers and grow market share by leveraging technology to create a cost advantage, service offering advantage, or niche solution.

Metrics

In the productivity areas of the MBIT Framework, the Metrics you track should be specific to your organization. Innovation Metrics might be things such as:

- **Convergent Adoption Rate**—There is a healthy cadence for migrating to modern technologies. (i.e., Collaboration, Cloud applications & Infrastructure, IoT devices, etc.).
- **Progress of Quarterly Initiatives**—A person or team within the company is charged with quarterly projects that explore ways to exploit new technologies.

Outcome: Decision-Making

Data-driven decision support changes how you see your business, fueling strategy, growth, and goal attainment.

Decision-Making Strategy, Analysis, Savings, Goal Attainment

Decision-Making covers the products and services that help you better manage your business. Products such as Power BI dashboards, analytics, consulting, and other services are often starting points to address this need. It is at the top of the IT stack in terms of value to an organization.

Objectives

- **Strategy Development:** Applications and processes that define your current position, identify opportunities and plot a course of action.
- **Data Analytics:** Tools and processes that harness the data in your systems and allow you to gain fresh insights, monitor results, and track trends.
- **Growth:** Committing to a data-driven culture and creating processes for collecting and using the correct data to fuel growth.
- **Cost Savings:** Increased visibility to cost drivers and transactional data to identify savings opportunities.
- **Goal Attainment:** Forecast and projection tools help to identify potential issues quickly and increase your chances of success.

Metrics

In the productivity areas of the MBIT Framework, the Metrics you track should be specific to your organization. Decision Metrics might be things such as:

- Key Performance Indicators (KPI)– Is your team KPI-driven? Are you using KPIs that really matter? Are they timely? Are they accurate?
- Data Ownership– Is each KPI or data source “owned” by a specific member of your team? Who is accountable for the data compilation, accuracy, and KPI results?